

A
Funeral Sermon

Preached upon the Death of

The Honourable

CHARLES FROST Esq;

One of His *Majesty's* Council for the
Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay* in N. E

Who departed this Life *Decem. 17. 1724.*

In the 47th Year of his Age.

By *Feremiah Wise*, M. A.
Pastor of the Church of Christ in *Berwick.*

*Psal. 44. 10. For he seeth that wise men die—
Eccl. 7. 2. —The living will lay it to his heart*

B O S T O N: Printed for D. Henchman, and sold
at his Shop over-against the Brick Meeting-
House. 1725.

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Funeral Sermon

Preached upon the Death of

The Honourable

CHARLES FROST Esq.

One of His Majesty's Council for the Province of New-Hampshire Bay in N. A.

Who departed Decem. 17. 1724.

In the 4th Year of his Age.



By Jeremiah Wolfe M. A.
Pastor of the Church of Christ in Boston.

Psalm 44. 10. For he said that will we were the
Eccles. 7. 2. The living will lay it to his heart.

Boston: Printed for D. Henshaw and sold
at his Shop over against the Brick-Market
House. 1725.



THE
ELDERS *ceasing from the Gate.*

Lam. 5. 14.

The Elders have ceased from the Gate.

THE Prophet *Jeremiah* (who was truly styled the *weeping Prophet*) did not only predict those awful *Changes* in Church and State, which past over *Judah* and *Jerusalem* in his Time, as the *Effect* of God's just Anger, for their Sins: But as became a good and a wise Man, a Father and a Friend of his Country, he was much affected to see those *Changes* when they came, and did heartily condole the departure of *Zion's* Glory. In this *Book* we have the Prophet's bitter *Lamentation* of those *Calamities*: wherein he does not merely act a Part, as a Reciter in a Scene, personate a Mourner, or artfully express a Sorrow; but he truly represents his own sorrowful Resentment of God's Hand, in the awful *Rebuke* they were under. His Words are the natural Expression of his own Grief, as well as adapted to move the most rocky and adamantine Hearts of others. How mournful and dejected is the Language of his Sorrows? How pathetic

tical and moving are his Words and Expressions! As oft as I take this Book into my Hands (says one) and read the Lamentations, I perceive my Speech to be stopt, and I am overwhelmed with Tears, and methinks I see that Calamity set before mine Eyes, and I joyn Lamentations with *Jeremiab* †. He that thro' a tender regard to their Welfare, wept at the foresight of their Miseries, and especially for their Sins, the procuring Cause thereof. *Jer.* 13. 17. could not choose but be distressed for them, when he saw his own Prophecies fulfilled. He could not refrain from Tears and Grief, when his Eye did thus affect his Heart. And how great his Grief was, he tells us, *Lam.* 3. 1. *I am the Man that hath seen Affliction by the Rod of his Wrath, he hath led me and brought me into Darknes and not into Light.* Thus did he sympathize with them in their Sorrows, yea although they wilfully brought them upon themselves. He was far from insulting them, or adding Affliction to the afflicted. Tho' many of them had been his Enemies, yet he was far from making any personal Reflections upon them as such. He rather commends them, makes a Funeral Oration, or mournful Elegy upon them. *The Crown is fallen from our Heads*. How is the Gold become dim! the most fine Gold changed! The precious Sons of Zion, he calls them:— Her Nazarites were purer than Snow, whiter than Milk, more ruddy in Body than Rubies, their polishing was of Sapphire* ‥ Thus highly does he speak of their seperated ones, as the Word [*Nazarites*] signifies, which must be taken here, for all, who either in respect of Birth, Education, Estate, places of Magistracy, or the like, were

† See Roberts's Key of the Bible. * Context, v. 16. ‥ *Lam.* 4. 1, 2, 3

were distinguished from the rest of the People*. By which Commendation of them, he aggravates his own Sorrow. He could not see the sacred Person of his Prince†, and other holy Persons violated, *as tho' they had not been anointed with Oyl*; the Lives and Liberties of the People invaded, their Estates confiscated, or turned to Strangers, and their Houses to Aliens, their Wives become Widows, and their Children Orphans and Fatherless, as in the foregoing Verses; and especially see the course of Justice stopt, there being none to sit in the Gate, none to relieve the oppressed, judge the Fatherless, and plead for the Widow, as in the Text: He could not see this without Sorrow. This opened the Springs of his Grief: *for these things he wept sore, and his Eyes failed with Tears*. But it is the Death of their Rulers, which he takes notice of in the Words now read; which I shall briefly Explain, and then name the Doctrine from them.

By Elders, we are to understand those that were Civil Rulers, or Judges by their Place and Office, who were to be the Shields of the Earth ||, Conservators of the publick Peace, and Revengers to execute Wrath on those that disturbed it §. Whether such do their Duty or no, this is the End they are ordain'd unto. And that such are here intended, and not Ecclesiastical Rulers, is evident, in that they are said to cease from the Gate. Which was the place where Courts were kept, to hear civil and criminal Causes, to determine Controversies, condemn the Guilty, and clear the Innocent. Thither it was, that Persons

The ELDERS ceasing

sons were to go for Justice. Deut. 25. 27. There Job kept his Court, that discerning and upright Judge, who put on Righteousness, and it clothed him, his Judgment was a Robe and a Diadem. He speaks of his going out to the Gate, thro' the City, and of his preparing his seat in the Street, Chap. 29. 7. Judgment was administered in the Gate, in the Street, in the chief Concourse, to which every Man might have a free access, that who would might be a Witness to all that was said and done, and then when Judgment was given against the Guilty, others might hear and fear*.

By their ceasing from the Gate, is nextly meant their being taken off from the publick Service, but remotely their Death is intended by it. Compare this with Chap. 1. v. 19. My Elders _____ gave up the Ghost. Now from the Words, as they stand related to the Context, and the Drift of the Prophet's Discourse, we may take up this Doctrine, viz.

When the Civil Rulers of a People die, and so are taken off from the publick Business, their Death should be lamented:

The Prophet here sets an Example to all others, in mourning their Death. Thus he mourned for Josiah, and all Judah and Jerusalem with him; and the singing Men and the singing Women, spake of Josiah, in their Lamentations, for a great while, a long time, after his Death†. And some think that King Josiah is meant there, by the anointed of the Lord, who is called the Breath of their Nostrils, Lam. 4. 20. But others

* Mr. Henry. † 2 Chron. 35. 24, 25.

others possibly with more Reason think that *Zedekiah* is here intended, tho' he were not so good a Prince, nor had he such Ministers of State, such Counsellours or Judges. And yet the Prophet pays this Respect to their Place, to mourn their Death: how much more should good Rulers be lamented? This Doctrine may be spoken to, under Two Propositions.

I. Prop. The Civil Rulers among a People must die, and cease from the Gate, or be taken off from the publick Service for good and all.

1. They must die. That Decree of Heaven, Heb. 9. 27. has the same aspect upon them, as upon the meanest. They brought Sin into the World with them. They are born under its guilt, and the sentence of Death. They are formed out of the Clay, and they must return to the Dust from whence they came. They are expos'd to the same Diseases and Casualties with others, the same sorrowful and painful Impressions. Their Bodies are as frail as the Bodies of other Men. Their Constitution is as weak, and sometimes weaker than others: And their Care and solicitude for the Publick, the Burthen of their Places, and the difficulties and the troubles they meet with in the discharge of their Trust, many times breaks the firmest Constitution, and hastens their Death. They can plead no exemption from it. Neither their high Places, their great Abilities for Service, their Wisdom which makes their Faces to shine, nor their Grace, can give them a Dispensation from it. Indeed their Piety to God, their Justice to Man, their Faithfulness in their Places, will render Death safe, and give them a pleasant prospect and view of the dark Valley. They that with *David* guide their People with

with Integrity as well as Skill †; who can appeal to God and Man, as to the Justice and Unblameableness of their Administration as Samuel could, when he came to resign the Government ||; and can plead with Hezekiab, on his supposed Death-bed *, that they have walked before God, with a perfect Heart, and that both as Rulers and as Christians; they that have Consciences sprinkled with the Blood of Christ, and have kept them pure, and without Offence towards God and Man; they have Armour of Proof against Deaths Sting, tho' not against his Dart. They must expect notwithstanding to fall under its stroke: for we see that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person. Psal. 49. 10. Rulers are called Gods, but they are mortal ones, and they must die like men. Psal. 82. 6. Your Fathers where are they? Zech. 1. 5. Are not the Rulers of former Generations dead and gone? whose places do not know them. Nay, is there a Remembrance of many of them? And where will those of the present Generation be in a few Years? but in that land of Darknes, the Grave, where the Light is as Darknes. They may say with David, 1 Chron. 29. 15. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our Fathers; our days on the Earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. Here they must not always live. They that are godly do not desire it; nor will their gracious Lord and Master always continue them, in a state of Labour and Peril. He will spare them to the World, as long as he has any Service for them to do in it, but when that is done they will be removed. This is a Truth so evident in it self, that I need not insist on the proof of it. It's

† Psal. 78. 72. || 1 Sam. 12. 2, 3, 4. * 2 Kings 20. 3.

It's a Point that calls rather for Consideration, than Proof: *Ob that we were wise, that we might understand this, that we would consider our latter end.*

2. *When our Rulers die, they cease from the Gate.* Death takes them off from the publick Business: Indeed they may be taken off from the Service of their King and Country, by other Means. They may be called from the Council-Board, and the Judges Bench, by *old Age*, the decays of Nature, the failing of their Powers, which render them unfit for Action. Few have such Vigour in their advanced Years, (*when the Grasshopper is a burthen*, Eccl. 12. 5.) as to be able to bear the burthen of Government. Some few Instances we have to the contrary, but the generality, before they can well be spared, retire off the Stage, and leave it to others to act their part upon it. But when our *aged Fathers* discharge themselves from the publick Service, they may by their Interest in Heaven, by their Influence on Earth, by their Counsel and Example, by their Faith and Prayers, be still serviceable. Still they are the Ornaments of the places they belong to, the *Chariots of our Israel*, the *Guardian Angels* to the State: *Gap-men* to keep out evil. And let them go off when they will, they go too soon for us, tho' not for themselves. Again, sometimes our Rulers are *laid aside* by those that have power to do it, for some Reason of State: but then this may be for a time only, and those that have been suspended, overlook'd or slighted, may be again restored, as *Pharaoh's chief Butler* was †, or be introduc'd on the Stage, by the favour of the Prince or People, and be again serviceable in the

the Government. But when they are removed by Death, they can be no farther serviceable in that nor any other respect. When they that are *as the Breath of a Peoples Nostrils* die, in that very day their thoughts perish *. The thoughts of the wisest projectors for the publick good, the ablest States-men, the most learned Judges, *the precious Sons of Zion*, who take her by the hands to guide her in her Civil Affairs, her Counsellours and wise Men, who are *comparable to fine Gold*, for their superiour Gifts and great Usefulness, they are accounted *as earthen Pitchers*, Lam. 4. 2. which go not so often to the Fountain, but they come home broken at last, and then are no farther useful. Death doth not only take those out of the World, who were discharged from publick Service by their Age, but those that are most active and serviceable to the State, who are in the midst of their Days and Usefulness, the Favourites of their Prince, or the Darlings of their Country. If *earthly Kings* be allow'd the prerogative to remove their great Officers, and to make what Changes in their Ministry they see cause, and no Body may say unto them, why do ye so? much more may the *King of Kings* be allow'd to display his Sovereignty, as he does, in the Changes that pass over Kings and Provinces, Princes and Nobles, and the Judges of the Earth: who is accountable to none for his doings in *Armies of Heaven*, or among the *Inhabitants on Earth*. Who doth not order Death to wait till Magistrates are laid aside, or are willing to die, or till the State can conveniently spare 'em; no, but he useth his pleasure herein, and many times calls them off, as
he

he did *Moses*, while their Eye is not dim with Age, nor their natural Force abated †, and when they are desirous of living, that they may see the Work they have been engaged in, brought to a happy Close; and when their Presence and Service seems necessary, and they will be much miss'd, even then they must cease from the Gate.

II. Pro. *When the Civil Rulers of a People die, and cease from the Gate, their Death ought to be lamented.*

For,

I. *This has been the laudable Practice of God's People of old, to mourn the Death of their Rulers.* Thus upon *Moses's* Death, that great Law-giver who was King in *Jeshurun*, they mourn'd for him thirty Days*, the usual time of mourning for Persons of Eminency. So *David* and his People mourned, wept and fasted on the News of *Saul's* Death and *Jonathan's* †. And what high Encomiums does *David* give them, in that admirable Composure he was the Author of, on that mournful Occasion, wherein he shewed, that he could use his Pen as well as his Sword: The Poetry of which is very fine, but his Piety exceeds his Poetry, in giving them their just Character, and that although *Saul* had been his great Enemy, and his Death made way for *David's* advancement to the Throne. And thus he lamented over *Abner*, though he had been engaged at the head of a strong Party against him: whom he gives the Style and Character of a Prince and a great Man, and acknowledges the greatness of the loss the publick sustained in him, and particularly *David* himself, who needed his Pre-

† Deut. 34. 7. * Deut. 34. 8. † 2 Sam. I. 12.

sence, Counsel and Influence so much at that juncture, in giving him the entire and peaceable Possession of all *Israel* †.

Thus do they hold forth our Duty, in their Example; and these things are written for our Admonition, that we may on the like Occasion, shew like Respect.

2. *This is a tribute which is due to their place, and which can't be withheld without great Injustice.* The Scripture puts great honour upon Rulers, and teaches us to do so. The *fifth Command* requires us to fear them for their Authority, and honour them for their Dignity: and a solemn mourning their Death, is one very fit and decent expression of our Reverence to them. They are the *Fathers* of a People, and they as well as other Fathers, deserve this respect from those that have been their Children, to be mourned for by them: especially if they have been *nursing Fathers* to them *. To part with them, without a due sense of our loss, implies a very dishonourable Reflection, and is great injustice to their Merits. It is the least Respect we can pay them that have lived desired, not to let them go to their Graves unlamented.

3. We should mourn over these great and good Men when they die, *because they are great Blessings in their places, and their Death infers a great loss to the Publick.* Civil Government is very needful, and there is no carrying on well without it, in our lapsed state, however it might have been in *Paradise*, had Man continued innocent. Tyranny is accounted better than *no Government*, better than *Anarchy*, when all
Persons

† 2 Sam. 3. 38, 39. * *I*sa. 49. 21.

Persons are upon a level, and every one does that which is right in their own Eyes; where there is none to put his Neighbour to shame in any thing, as it was in *Israel*, when there was no Magistrate in the Land †. How much better is a well formed Government, where the Laws are the measure of the Prince's Prerogative, and of the Peoples Liberties? who enjoy such Rulers, as make the Principles of their Religion, the Maxims of their Government. Who do by their Power, Authority and Influence, promote Religion, which *exalteth a Nation*, and set forward the reformation of Manners: at least suppress Sin, *which is the Reproach of any People*, especially of a professing religious People. Civil Rulers are *Custodes utriusq; Tabulæ*; they have the charge of God's holy Name and Day, of his Worship, Laws and Institutions, and of his Ministers: And they should employ all their Power to advance the Kingdom and Interest of *Jesus Christ*, as well as to defend the Lives, Liberties and Estates of his People, which they have the care and charge of also. A great and solemn Charge this! Now those that lay out themselves to promote God's Honour and their Peoples Interest, under whose Rule they enjoy great quietness, *leading peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty*; who execute Judgment for the restraint and terrour of evil doers, and for the protection and praise of them that do well; they must be look'd upon as great Blessings. And hence, as they justly deserve the tribute of Honour and Support the Apostle assigns them, *Rom. 13. 7.* while they live: so when they die, a People should shew the honourable Esteem they had of

† Judg. 17. 6. Chap. 18. 7.

them, by not suffering them to go to their Graves unobserved. They are Guides of a People, to conduct them thro' a Wilderness of Difficulties, as God led his People of old, *by the hand of Moses and Aaron*, Psal. 77. 20. The *Pilots* to steer the Ship of the Common-wealth, thro' a Sea of Trouble. The *Shields* of the Earth under God, who stand nextly exposed to the Blow, which may be aimed at a whole Community: who many times gain the displeasure of Men, by their faithfulness to God and his People. And can we part with those great *Benefactors*, by whose Providence very worthy Deeds are done to our Nation, to our Land, to our State, and to our Churches; without a due resentment of the Providence: Shall our *Shields* be so *vilely cast away*? Shall we part with those without Grief, who have been the joy of our Hearts? One would think, Self-interest should put us upon laying to heart the Death of those who have been Ministers of God to us for so much good, if Grace and Duty do not: And so we should, if we knew their Worth, who are *Pillars* to bear up the Fabrick, to support the whole Building, without whom all would quickly fall to the Ground, as it happened in *Eli's* and *Saul's* time, when *the Earth and the Inhabitants of it were dissolved* for want of such. And the more wise and knowing in the times they are, like the Children of *Issachar* †, the better qualified every way to serve a People, and the fewer such there be, and the less likelihood there is of others rising up in the room of such Leaders, and making good their Ground, the greater is the publick Loss, and therefore the more is the Death of such to be lamented.

4: *Such*

4. Such are sometimes taken away in displeasure at a sinful People, which also calls for mourning and Lamentation. The Sins of Communities as such are punish'd only in this life, and this is one way in which the Lord witnesses his displeasure against them, by removing those from amongst them, who have been great Blessings to them. For the Transgressions of a People, many are the Princes thereof. Death makes frequent Changes, more worthy removed, and those of less note coming up in their place. God deprived Israel of Moses's Conduct and Government, when they most needed it; and his Death was more a Punishment to them, than to himself, with whom it went ill for their sakes. So was Josiab cut off by an untimely Death, in Judgment to that People, tho' it was in Mercy to himself. Judah was made bare, and strip'd of worthy Men, for their Sins in Abaz's time. Thus God takes in anger, those that he gave in mercy and kindness to a People. When our Rulers are either *idolized* or *undervalued*, both ways God is provoked, and the Mercy forfeited; which he may take away; and when he doth so, is not this a mournful Consideration? Surely it becomes the most heroick Minds to melt under the tokens of God's Anger, and at the remembrance of Sin, which pulls down Wrath. This was it which made Joshua that great Hero to lie so low, and to roll himself in the very dust before the Lord, on the loss of about thirty Men, when they fled before the Men of Ai. Joshua 7. 5, 6. It could not be the greatness of the loss meerly, that made him so sad and mournful upon it; but this was the great aggravation, its being a token of God's Anger and Wrath for Achan's Sin, who had taken the *accursed thing*. Even so it should break

break our Hearts, to see God's anger in the loss of our excellent Rulers in Church and State. This should affect us, if our loss doth not. When our heavenly Father *chides*, and even *spits in our very faces*, should we not be ashamed and humbled? We should judge and condemn our selves on such Occasions, as that holy Man Mr. *Wigglesworth* does on the Death of some of his Brethren. "God's visiting hand (says he) has pluck'd away from us, four Brethren of our Church, in a few Days. The Lord was pleas'd to set in and break my Heart, and shew me that I am the Man, who sin unto Death, the precious Servants of God, and drive God from the place where I live, and I pull down Wrath †". Instead of laying the blame upon others, or reflecting on our Rulers themselves, and saying, it's the Sins of these and those; we should every one look at home, and judge our selves, and say, It is my Sins that have provoked the Lord to take away our excellent Majestates and Ministers, of whom the World was not worthy.

5. Lastly. *Their Death many times makes way for more Evil.* It opens a flood-gate for all manner of Evil to rush in at, both moral and penal.

It makes way to the evil of *Sin*. Sin ordinarily will get head, upon the Death of zealous godly Magistrates. When those who have been instrumental of suppressing Sin and Prophaness, of curbing it in and preventing the growth of Iniquity, have been removed by Death, Sin hath come rushing in like a mighty Flood. Thus we read that *after the death of Joshua, and the rest of that Generation that knew the*

† See the Appendix to Dr. G. Mather's Funeral Sermon for him, Pag. 33.

the works of the Lord, the Children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. Judg. 2. 8—11. They grew more and more corrupt, notwithstanding all means used by those Judges and Reformers, that God raised up amongst them from time to time to prevent it. What was gain'd in their life time, was lost upon their decease, as v. 19. And it came to pass when the Judge was dead, they returned and corrupted themselves more than their Fathers. When the Judge was dead, they look'd upon the Damm which stop't the Stream of Idolatry as removed, and then it flow'd down again with so much the more fury, and the next Age seem'd to be rather the worse for the attempts that were made towards a Reformation †. Thus it was also after the Death of *Jeboiada*, that great Reformer: all whose days they did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, with respect to his Worship, keeping to primitive Institution; but after his Death, they left the House of the Lord, and served Groves *. So it was after *Hezekiab's* and *Josiah's* Death: while they lived, they kept out those Evils which followed upon the corrupting of it; but as soon as their Heads were laid, and being succeeded by corrupt Judges and vicious Princes and Rulers, who pulled down what their Predecessors had been building up, the People soon made a defection from those good ways. When vile Men are exalted, the wicked walk on every side. Psal. 12. 8. When the Righteous are in Authority, the People rejoice, but when the wicked beareth Rule the People mourn. Prov. 29. 2. And one Reason is, because Sin then prevails; and this is that that frequently attends the Death of good Rulers. Rivers

† Mr. Henry in loc. * 2 Chron. 24. 2—18.

of Water, of Tears should run down our Eyes when Men keep not God's Law, and that especially when the Death of our Rulers is the inlet to Sin; whose Presence and Influence might in a great measure have prevented it. When this Torrent flows in at the Breach made by their removal, it's matter of Lamentation.

Their Death is many times an ill Omen, a prognostick of impending Calamities, and makes way for those Judgments which have been kept off by their Intercessions, their zealous endeavours to suppress Sin, their faithfulness in bearing Witness against it. As Phineas by his Zeal for the Lord of Hosts, his executing Judgment upon Zimri and Cozbi, those leading Sinners, the Plague already begun was stayed. By this and some other such like acts of publick Justice on that Occasion, the Guilt ceased to be National, and the general Controversy was let fall: When the proper Officers (says Mr. Henry) did their Duty, God left it to them, and did not any longer keep the Sword in his own Hands. National Justice, prevents National Judgments. A few zealous Magistrates may thus prevent Wrath from coming upon a People for a time at least, or put a stop to the execution of it, when it is already begun. But as soon as such are removed, there is a gap opened for evil to come in at; and their Death makes way for it. Judgment does but wait for that Opportunity. *The Righteous are taken away from the evil to come.* Isai. 57. 1. and to make way for it. Thus was Josiah's Death ordered at that time, to prepare the way to God's Anger against Judah, for their Sins in Manasse's time. To speak with Reverence, the Lord will do nothing till they are removed out of

of the way: as he would not destroy Sodom till Lot was departed and was safe in Zoar. Gen. 19. 22. *Haste thee, (says the Lord to him) escape thither, for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither.* When Lot is escaped to the Mount, let Sodom look to it. When Noah is hous'd in the Ark, let the old World beware: When godly Magistrates die thick and fast, let their Death be a warning to us. When they are housed in the Grave, and enter into the Chambers of the Divine Presence, then look for the overflowing Scourge to pass through. It looks as though there was some Evil quickly to follow, some awful Judgment at the door. Especially when their Death is not duly laid to heart, and those that are left behind can do little towards a thorow Reformation; who shall but deliver their own Souls and not be able to keep off Judgments from others. Surely then, where there is ground to fear that the Death of our Rulers is to make way for Judgment, that's a sufficient Reason to mourn their Death; in whose removal, so much of God's Presence and Blessing goes away, and way is made for all manner of evil. Oh how should we with good Eli, tremble for the Ark of God! Yea, these fore-warnings should make the very Ears of all that hear them or observe them to tingle. This should make us with the Church, Lam. 1. 16. to say, *For these things I weep, mine Eye mine Eye runneth down with Tears, because the Comforter is far from me.* As though it had been said; Those that should have been Gap-men to keep out evil from breaking in, that should have turned away God's Wrath, and have engaged his Presence and Blessing, by establishing Judgment in the Gate; (Amos 5. 15.) and so have been a comfort to us are removed, or God's Presence and

and Grace with them. Let this suffice in speaking to the *Doctrine*, which may be improved in the following Particulars.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. Must our Rulers die? *This may learn us Caution in trusting in them.* There is a duly regulated Trust to be placed in our Rulers. And it is an evil thing to entertain groundless Jealousies of them, as though they sought not the publick good; since they may endeavour it, tho' in ways that lie not level to every Man's Capacity, or that suit not with other Men's Schemes. Their Wisdom and Fidelity should give check to those evil Surmises, and conciliate a People's good esteem, and draw forth their Trust and Reliance towards them, *as Instruments under God*, adapted to promote their well-being. Rulers that are Men of Integrity, and steady in their Conduct, that are vigilant to espy Dangers which threaten the State, and are industrious to prevent them; that seek their People's good, and improve all Advantages to promote it, may and should be *confided in*, and a People ought to acquiesce in their Conduct. But let them not carry the matter too far, and meerly *idolize* them. As they should not on the one hand be set too *low* in our esteem, as not worthy of any Regard, or not fit to be trusted, which is the extream on that hand; so neither should they be set at too *high* a Value, and be placed in God's stead. Let us not put that trust in the *Arm of Flesh*, which is only to be placed in the *living God*. We should not place too much confidence in the wisest and best of Men, nor raise our Expectations from them.

them too high, lest God should leave them to themselves, blast their Abilities, or take them away in his Anger, (as he does sometimes when idolized) and so they should fail our trust. *Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the Son of Man in whom there is no help: his Breath goeth forth, he returneth to his Earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.* Psal. 146. 3, 4. It might have been fear'd that David, who had been so great a Blessing to his Country should be ador'd, according to the usage of the Heathen Nations, who deified their Heroes: that they should come and trust in his shadow, and make him their Stay and their Stronghold: No, (saith David) *put not your trust in Princes, not in me, not in any other †. for their Breath goeth forth, and the sooner for doting on your Fellow-creatures, and too much admiring their rare Endowments. Cease ye from Man, whose Breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?* Mai. 2. 22.

2. Is it so, that our wise and faithful Rulers must die? Then how needful is it, that effectual care be taken, that there be a suitable number of duly qualified Persons in all places raised up to succeed them as they go off the Stage, and fill up the Vacancies which are thereby made. That our Zion may have some of her own Sons whom she shall bring up, to take her by the hand, and guide her in all her ways. Thus it hath been hitherto in this Land, thro' Divine Favour. And this has been owing as to Means, to our Fathers early Zeal to promote Schools of Learning, especially the College, from whence not only the Pulpit has been supplied for the most part, but almost every Chair in Government has been filled. And it is by a due encouragement

of Learning, that *future times* must be provided for, and a succession of able Rulers must be secured. For this end, those with whom the care of this matter lies should see to it, that not only there be Schools in all places as the Law directs, but that they be supplied with suitable Persons to preside in them, and that those who devote themselves to this Service be duly encouraged; as also that those who are at great Expence to accomplish themselves to serve the Publick, be not only employed, but well rewarded for their Service. This is not only what Reason, the Light of Nature as well as Scripture requires, but what Prudence seems to dictate, as a very fitting means to secure a *Succession* of such Rulers as *Jethro* directed *Moses* to set over the People. *Exod. 18. 21.* But if our *Legislators*, or rather those that are concerned with the *executive* part of Power look on and see the Laws about Schools eluded, (as it's to be fear'd they be in too many places) and the People thro' a careless or covetous Spirit, or a meer prejudice to Learning, do in effect what *Julian* the Apostate did out of Policy in putting down learned Schools, we shall in a little time see the Revolution of the *barbarous Age*. And when for Persons to devote themselves to the publick Service, be to court Poverty and Disgrace, thro' a *scandalous Maintenance*; that is like to be the Answer of those who are most fit for places of publick Trust, to them that invite them into such Stations, which the *Olive*, the *Fig-tree* and the *Vine*, in *Jotham's Parable*, gave to the other *Trees* †: When a Man will be look'd for that is able or willing, and will not be found to stand in

† *Judg. 9. 9, 10, 11.*

in the Gap. Ezek. 23. 30. *Isai.* 51. 18. And when the undisciplined and uninstructed Youth (as one speaks) come upon the Stage and are the standing Generation, and there are none but such in any places to rule and govern the rest, the State is like to be ill governed; and instead of Learning, Religion and Righteousness; Ignorance, Barbarity, Vice and all Disorder is like to be the complexion of those times.

3. Must our Rulers die, tho' never so worthy, never so capable to serve the Publick? *How great a mercy is it, to have others of their Principles and Spirit to rise up in their Room and take their Places, when they are taken away?* This was the happy state of God's People after *Moses's* Death, when there was a *Joshua* to succeed him, who had been bred up under him as his Minister; bred up to *Business* before he was advanced to Honour: who *was of the same Mind*, and was likely to *walk in the same Spirit, in the same Steps*. This was a great Mercy to that People, and so it is to any People, to have those rising up in the room of them that are gone or going off the Stage, who are like to *make up the Breach* in a good measure. It is a sad thing when God takes away the Judge, and the prudent, the ancient; the honourable Man and the Counsellour, as he threatens†, and there are none duly qualified to fill up the Vacancies; for by this means a People are in danger of being oppressed every one by another, and every one by his Neighbour. When there is *no strong Rod for a Scepter to rule*, this is a Lamentation, and should be for a Lamentation. Ezek. 19. 14. Happy is the People with

† *Isai.* 3. 1—5.

with whom it is quite the reverse; to whom God is fulfilling that gracious Promise, *Isai. 1. 26. I will give them Judges as at the first, and Counsellours as at the beginning.* Happy is that People that is in such a case; yea happy is that People whose God is the Lord.

4. Is it as we have heard, that our Rulers must die, and be taken off from the Service of the Publick for good and all? *Let the consideration hereof quicken them in their Work,* since there will be no Opportunity to serve God and their People afterward. And this is that which makes Life so desireable to good Men, that they might have opportunity to shew their love to God, their zeal for his Interest, their loyalty and faithfulness to their great Lord and Master. Now this Opportunity will be then over; and what is the natural result of this Thought, but that Inference which the wise Man draws from it; *Eccles 9. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest.* Our honourable Rulers should work, as their great Lord and Master did, whilst the Day lasts, for the Night cometh, wherein no Man can work. *Job. 9. 4.*

Further, when they die, they must give in their Account of the improvement of their Talents. Rulers well as others are accountable to God, particularly for the Power and Honour that has been entrusted in their hands, and the improvement they have made thereof; the good or hurt they have done therewith. *Matth. 25. 30. Rom. 14. 12.* And according as they will then be found to have used their Masters Goods, so they will be dealt withal by him who respects not Persons in Judgment; no not the Persons of the

the *mighty*. Now how forcible a Consideration is this in it self, and should it be with all Christians in general, who believe the Resurrection of the dead, and a future state of Rewards and Punishments; so especially with *Magistrates* who have *so great* a work to do, and *so great* an account to render. This should quicken them to be painful and faithful in their Work, that they may be ready for their Account, and may be able when call'd thereto, to give it up with Joy.

Lastly. I might hint at one thing more, which the Death of such suggests to *Survivours*, and that is, that there is *so much* the more work devolves upon them that succeed them, to whom the Lord seems to say much the same he did to *Joshua* upon the Death of *Moses*, Josh. 1. 2. *Moses my Servant is dead, now therefore arise.*—— As though he should say, Tho' *Moses* be dead, the Work must go on, therefore arise and go about it; let not weeping hinder sowing, nor the withering the most useful Hands be the weakening of yours. Because *Moses* is dead, therefore the Work devolves upon thee as his Successor. Up and be doing, and be the more painful now *Moses* is dead and can help no more, that so it may not suffer thro' the want of him †. Those that are called to succeed others that have been eminent Servants to the Publick, should endeavour to accomplish themselves for Service. They that are call'd to such high and honourable Stations, should look as well at the *Onus* as the *Honos*, at the *Burthen* as well as the *Honour* of such places. They should have an eye at being serviceable to their Country in those Offices they sustain,

tain, whose good and benefit they should seek, in subordination to the glory of that God *by whom Kings reign and Princes decree Justice*. And upon the Death of such, *Survivors* should lay themselves out to the utmost that the Work of God mayn't *stand still*, much less *go behind hand* for want of such.

5. Hence we may infer that which may be *matter of Comfort to our godly, wise and faithful Rulers*. For if they must die, they will then be *ease'd* of the present Burthen they are under, by the publick Service they are call'd to if not before: Yea, then they will *cease from their Labours, and their Works will follow them*. Civil Rulers as well as Ministers have a hard Province, a difficult Post in the management of the publick Affairs, in which they meet with great Discouragement from the frowardness, the discontent, the jarrings and animosities among a People. These put the wisest and best Men to it; even a meek *Moses* complain'd, *How can I bear your Cumbrance, and your Burthen, and your Strife?* Deut. 1. 12. Now this Burthen will be taken off their Shoulders, they will be discharg'd from their difficult Post at Death. And this they should look upon as a Favour when the time comes. Tho' in the mean time they should *endure as seeing him that is invisible*; wait for the promise with Patience, after they have done the will of God, and courageously go thro' their Work †, while God continues them in it, *passing thro' good Report and evil*, without being moved at these things. Yet when their Change comes, after thus waiting for it all the days of their appointed time ||, they should account it a Priviledge. Yea a Priviledge, a
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† Josh. 1. 7. 2 Chron. 19. 11. || Job 14. 14.

Favour it is which God distinguishes some of his Servants by, in calling them off from their Work in the *heat* of the Day, that they may take their *rest* in the Grave, which is become the Dormitory or sleeping place of the Saints. There the *weary* be at rest, as well as the *wicked* cease from troubling. *They rest in their Beds, each one walking in his Uprightness. They rest from their Labours, and their Works follow them.* Rev. 14. 14. They follow them in respect of that great and glorious *Reward* which they that have served God faithfully in publick as well as in a private Capacity, will receive in another World, which will be distinguishingly so. If those that sit at the upper end of the World do *excel* in Grace and Usefulness, they will not be *degraded* in another World, but proportionably *advanced*. 1. Cor. 15. 41, 42 — *For one Star differeth from another in Glory.* Their Works will follow them, as they will still be employed in Service suitable to that glorious State where his Servants do *still* serve him. Rev. 7. 5. We can't tell how *well*, but be sure far *better* than they did or could do here, while they had a Body of Sin to hinder them, and an Adversary standing at their *right hand* (the hand for Action) ready to *resist* them; By which means the best Rulers are liable to fall into Errors and Mistakes, which if they be not retained as Blots in their *Escutcheons*, yet will serve to convict the World that they were not perfect as they will be after Death, when *they will serve God without Sin or Defect*, with the greatest activity, constancy and delight. Should they not be willing then when the time comes, to *depart and to be with Christ*, which is far better than to be here; to be with that sweet peaceful Society, than with the *wrangers*, the dis-

puters of this World? But it is indeed more needful for others they be continued according to the pleasure of the Divine Will; while the prospect of their future Happiness should put them on not only preparing but *looking* and even *longing* for it. The *hireling* does not look or long more for the shadows of the Evening, that he may leave off Work and receive his Reward, *Job* 7. 2. than the true Servants of God do or should long for the enjoyment of God in Glory.

6. Is it as we have heard, that the Death of our Rulers is to be lamented? Hence then, *how justly reproveable are those who do not duly lay to heart the Death of such.* This is a Debt we owe to the meanest Person. Man goeth to his long home, and the Mourners go about the Streets. *Eccl.* 12. 5. *It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for this is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.* *Eccl.* 5. 2. God expects that we do suitably lay to heart the Death of *all*, but especially the Death of Persons of Character and Distinction, who were bless'd with peculiar Talents to serve their People, and were publick Blessings, in whose Death much of the Glory departs; and the want of a due sense of God's Hand therein is very displeasing to him. *The Righteous perisheth, and no man lays it to heart.* — *Hai.* 57. 1. The Lord speaks of it as a matter of Grievance, a thing that is impious as well as inhumane, signifying a very stupid frame of Spirit, a contempt of his Providence. To which contemptuous Carriage under such a Dispensation, we may apply the Words of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, Chap. 5. 3. *O Lord thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; they have refused to receive correction: they have made their*

their faces harder than a rock. This savours of shameful Ingratitude also to God and them; who have been good and faithful Servants to the Publick, and do for that reason deserve to have Statues of Brass or Marble erected for them to perpetuate their Memory. But the least that can be done is to mourn their Death; which Honor is the matter of a Promise †, and those that either out of Prejudice or any corrupt and sinister Views neglect it, are justly reproveable for it: And this as soon as any thing may bring the same Curse upon them which is threatened, and which as far as they can they endeavour to execute upon others, to die unlamented. Jer. 22. 18.

7 And lastly. Is it as we have heard, that the Death of our Rulers is to be lamented? Hence then, thou wilt justify us in taking up the Words of the Prophet in the Text and Context, as we have great reason to do this Day, and to say, *The Elders have ceased from the Gate.* — For this our heart is faint thro' Grief and Sorrow; for these things our Eyes are dim with weeping. Though our Case is not in this nor any other respect altogether like theirs; for we see our Rulers as well as Teachers, many of them; yet except we duly lay to heart the Death of our excellent Rulers of all Orders, so many of whom have been taken away from us in a very little time, we don't know how soon we may have as much cause and reason as they had to say, *The Crown is fallen from our head, we unto us that we have sinned.* Context, v. 19. And it's well if this will prevent it. For as Doctor Mather observes from an ingenuous Author as he calls him; when a Generation of contemporary Persons begins

† Jer. 34. 5.

to crack it quickly falls. The Leases of their earthly Cottages commencing at the same time, oft at the same time expire †. And our *Unthankfulness* for the great Blessing we have enjoy'd in wise and faithful Rulers both in the State and Church, and our *Ingratitude to them* who have been faithfully serving their Generation by the will of God; Our *Murmuring and Discontent*, have given the Lord just provocation to take away the *whole Stay* and the *whole Staff*, as he threatens, *Isai. 3. 1.* and to leave none to us to *lean on*, or none but such as are too like the *Reed of Egypt**, a *broken Reed*, which will give way or pierce the hand that leans on it. The Lord has had a long Controversy with us in this respect, and for all this *his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still*. How many excellent Persons in publick Stations (besides those in more private Capacity) have been in a very little time call'd off the Stage, where they were acting their part with great applause? Death hath shut up the *Scene*, and they must appear upon the publick *Theatre* no more: *Their Places shall know them no more*. And as most places have been particular sharers in the publick Loss; so have we in this County, in the Death of three of the honourable Members of our *Inferiour Court*, who have died in less than a twelve Month: Besides one of the *Ecclesiastical Order*; whose Death in concurrence with many others in other parts, calls aloud upon us, as a People, to *humble our selves before the Lord*; to *search and try our ways*, and turn again unto him. But I shall speak something particu-

† See Dr. I. Mather's Funeral Sermon for Mr. Bayly, p. 34.
 * *Isai. 36. 6.*

lately of *One of them*, whose Death is the Occasion (as you may be sensible) of my present Discourse, viz. The honourable *Charles Frost*, Esq; who was here for the last time a few *Sabbaths* since, attending on the publick Worship of God with us, but is now gathered to the Congregation of the dead.

I shall not pretend to give him his *Character*, but only hint at a few Particulars to illustrate something of his *Worth*, and the greatness of our loss in his Death: Who was a Man of great *natural Abilities*, and did excel in a *clear Head*, a *solid Judgment*, and a very *tenacious Memory*; all which seldom meet to such a *degree* in the same Person. These laid a foundation in him for considerable Attainments in *Wisdom and Knowledge*: And by the advantage of a good Education, Reading, Observation, constant and deep Thought and Industry, he had amass'd or heap'd together a rich Treasure of *useful Learning*. Yea, so *polite* was he for one of his Opportunities, that his Conversation was admir'd as pleasant and profitable by Men of Letters, and that had travelled abroad.

He was considerably studied in the *Mathematicks*, *Natural Philosophy*, *History*, but he did excel himself in the knowledge of the *English Law*, which he had made much his Study, as did well become a *Gentleman of his Character*.

He was a true *English-Man*, and had a great and just value for the great and glorious Priviledges of his *Nation*, as well as *Country*.

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He was as a Man of Principles and Integrity, and approv'd himself so particularly in the Posts of Honour which he sustain'd, which were neither purchased nor abused. These were several. For besides his being early chosen into the General Assembly of this Province, and his sustaining divers Military Posts, (particularly that of Major of the Regiment, in all which he acquitted himself well) he was several Years intrusted with the place of High-Sheriff of this County, which Trust he discharg'd to such general Acceptance, that he was taken notice of by the Government for it. And accordingly he was made a Justice for the Peace, and a Judge of the Inferiour Courts; in which place he shewed his great Acumen, his Judgment and Skill in the Law, and was exemplary for his Gravity, Justice and Impartiality.

Also as a testimony of the good esteem the Country in general had of him, he was in the Year 1719 chosen into the Council, to which honourable Board he did belong afterward to the Day of his Death. I had almost forgot his being Register to the Judge of Probate successively between twenty and thirty Years; in which place he was very serviceable to this County.

He was a Man of Religion as well as Justice; a devout Attendant on God's publick Worship, and in his advanced Years, constant to the Devotions of Family-Religion, not suffering himself to be diverted from it by any Occurrent whatsoever.

He was one that ruled well his own House, having

his Children in subjection with all Gravity, whom he brought up in God's fear.

He was an Example in his own Family of Sobriety, Temperance, Frugality, Diligence, Prudence, Patience, as he was also of social Virtues; all which shew'd the soundness of his Christian Principles. He was observ'd to favour Doctrines purely Evangelical, embracing and adoring the Mysteries of our holy Religion, which cannot be comprehended.

But to conclude, Omitting many things very commendable and praise-worthy in him, Two things were of singular Remark, a little before his last Sickness: His deadness to the World, and the Presage he had upon his Spirit of his approaching Change, which he would be often speaking of; expressing his cheerful Resignation to the will of God. So frequent were his Discourses about his speedy departure, that an intimate Friend fearing such Impressions might on the account of that Melancholly which seem'd to prevail in his Constitution, be prejudicial to him, would have diverted him from the dark Theme; to whom his Reply was, That he must speak whilst he could, he might be abridg'd of that Liberty afterward. And truly what he fear'd (being under paralytical apoplectical Symptoms) was his case. For he could say but little in his last Weeks, yet to the last manifested (mostly by Signs) a wonderful Affection to Ministers, and others his Christian Friends, and the Devotions that were carried on with him in his dying Chamber.

These things I have spoken, not to provoke Envy, but

but to stir up a laudable *Emulation* in others to imitate what was Exemplary in him; yea to go and outdo him in all that was Virtuous and Praise-worthy in him, as they should shun those *Rocks*, if there were any, at which he might have been in danger of ship-wrecking his Honour: Whose *Infirmities* and Faults, for he was not without, do claim this Priviledge, by the Rule of *Charity*, which covereth the multitude, to be buried in Oblivion. But so must not his *Virtues* and good *Works*, but be set before us for our Imitation, and that we may see how great our loss is, and how justly he is lamented. It requires an *Age* almost to breed and furnish a Man with due Qualifications to serve the *Publick* †, and *New-England* doth not so abound with pious, prudent, faithful Gentlemen at this time, but it may sensibly feel the loss of *such* a Man. So may this *County* in a particular manner, in which there is a great *Dearth* of Men fit for such Posts of Honour. When such *Cedars* fall, the whole *Wood* must eccho the Resentment of it. I will not say of our *Zion* as the Prophet of *Jerusalem*, Lam. 1. 2. *That among all her Sons she hath none to comfort her*; but this I may say, with a great deal of Truth, that she hath one the less for him, who was a true Friend to his Country, and as capable to serve it as most he has left behind. Our Loss at present seems irreparable, but that that God who gave him all his Gifts, natural and acquired, and made him to be what he was to his People, (to whom therefore we should give all the Glory) he can raise up another in his room to do worthily also. Let us in the mean

† Mr. Flavel.

mean time, as we have great cause to do, in low before God, under this and other such sore Rebukes of his Providence, lest we should provoke him by our insensibleness of his Hand, to remove the rest of our Worthies, whom let God long continue, and greatly prosper his Work in their hands.

His Death is a great rebuke on this Church, in the fellowship of which he has continued ever since it was first gathered; and he was a peculiar Ornament to it. Much of our Beauty and Glory is fallen in him, and our Honour laid in the Dust, which the Father of lights, the God of the Spirits of all Flesh, only can repair.

Let God comfort the bereaved Family, whose just Sorrows and Grief need rather to be regulated than excited. Learn the vanity of the Creature, in the loss of so loving and kind a Husband, so tender a Father, who was the guide of your Youth. Turn your Sorrow into the right Channel, and mourn under this Bereavement, not as those that mourn without hope. Think not the worse of Religion, for these grievous Afflictions he underwent, by which God was weaning him from the World, and preparing him for a better.

Madam! Call not the love of God in question, because he leaves you not without Chastisement; but look upon this Visitation following upon the back of others, rather as evidential of it. For he saith, Rev. 3. 19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Let the Children take hold of that Promise in
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the 27 Psalm, v. 10. Endeavour to *imitate* your *honoured Father* in what was exemplary in him, That he may *still live* in his Children. Let not Religion die, though he be dead. Maintain that course of Religion, Righteousness, and every other Virtue wherein he walked so *exemplarily* before you.

Let us all *prepare* by a *thorow Change* of our Hearts and Lives, a *true Faith in Christ*, and an universal Obedience to all God's Commands, for a happy Death. Let us *put on the whole Armour of God*, that we may be ready for this last Encounter, this War, wherein there is *no Discharge*. Gird up the loins of our Minds, watch and be sober, and hope to the end; Giving all Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure; for *so an entrance shall be administred to us abundantly, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*



F I N I S.